

1991/14. Human rights and extreme poverty

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling that the peoples of the United Nations have reaffirmed in the Charter of the United Nations their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person,

Mindful that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family,

Recalling that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights recognize that the ideal of free human beings, enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights,

Reaffirming that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interrelated and that the promotion and protection of one category of rights should never exempt or excuse States from the promotion and protection of other rights,

Recalling that the elimination of widespread poverty and the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights remain interrelated goals,

Deeply concerned by the fact that, despite the progress achieved by the international community in ensuring the effective enjoyment of human rights, extreme poverty continues to spread throughout the world, seriously affecting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and groups in all countries, who are thus hindered in the exercise of their human rights and their fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing, moreover, that respect for and promotion of human rights are essential if individuals are to participate freely and responsibly in the development of the society in which they live,

Recalling its resolution 1990/15 of 23 February 1990, in which it requested the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to examine the question of extreme poverty and exclusion from society in greater depth and to carry out a specific study of this question,

Recalling its resolution 1990/14 of 23 February 1990,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 44/148 of 15 December 1989,

Recalling decision 1989/8 adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund at its first regular session of 1989, in which

it is emphasized, inter alia, that a more thorough knowledge of the situation of the poorest, of their living conditions and the pre-conditions for their partnership would make it easier to reach the groups in question,

Noting with satisfaction Sub-Commission decision 1990/119 of 30 August 1990, in which the Sub-Commission requested Mr. Eduardo Suescún Monroy to prepare, without financial implications, the method and plan of work for the study on human rights and extreme poverty requested by the Commission in its resolution 1990/15 and decided to consider the preliminary version of this study at its forty-third session,

Bearing in mind the action already taken in the relevant forums to ensure the realization of economic, social and cultural rights,

Aware of the need for a better understanding of the causes of extreme poverty, including the causes connected with the problems of development, and its interaction with the enjoyment of human rights,

1. Reaffirms that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

2. Calls upon States, the specialized agencies and United Nations bodies and other international organizations, including intergovernmental organizations, to give the necessary attention to this problem when they make known their views on human rights based on solidarity, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/148;

3. Draws the attention of the General Assembly and all United Nations bodies to the contradiction between the existence of situations of extreme poverty and exclusion from society, which must be overcome, and the duty to guarantee full enjoyment of human rights;

4. Encourages the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to give the necessary attention, in its work, to the question of extreme poverty and exclusion from society;

5. Recommends that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, when considering, in accordance with its decision 1990/119, the method and plan of work for the study on human rights and extreme poverty, should give attention more particularly to the conditions in which the poorest themselves can convey their experience and so contribute to a better understanding of the harsh reality of their lives and its causes.

38th meeting
22 February 1991

[Adopted without a vote. See chap. VII.]